

BUILDING SAFETY NEWS

PUBLISHED BY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES DIVISION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>ICC Code Development</i>	2
<i>Permit demand strong</i>	2
<i>DCO speaks to ALA</i>	2
<i>2006 I Code Adoption</i>	3
<i>Special Inspection Policy</i>	3
<i>VBCOA Annual Conf.</i>	3
<i>2006 Codes Coming</i>	4

Work Load

- 1248 permits were issued in the last month. These included 33 new Single and Multi-Family Residential buildings and 7 new commercial buildings including the Hampton Inn, a 7/11 on Virginia Beach, a new self-storage facility on Little Creek Road and strip shopping center on Military Highway.
- Plan Review turn-around status: Residential, 9 days; Commercial 23 days.
- Inspection status: 24 hour turn-around

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EXPERIENCED NEW STAFF JOIN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Several experienced building safety professionals have joined the Building Construction Division this month. Seven additional staff are already performing their technical responsibilities that include plan review, permit review, inspection and technical support. Carol Merrill, Phillip Winslow, Robert Tejan, Shirley Core, Clyde Bryant, Richard Potts and Jesse Middlebrook are new faces in the Division. These new staff bring technical and customer service experience from neighboring local governments as well as the private sector. This first wave of staff enhancements has already affected the backlog of permit applications. "New and existing staff have reduced the inventory of new single family plan review down to only 11. By doing so, the public is served with a quick turn-around that competes with neighboring jurisdictions while still gleaning for basic code requirements that are better satisfied before construction begins", said Lynn Underwood, Code Official. "These additional staff will augment an organization of dedicated group of professionals who love to serve their

Customers.", he added.

Additionally, a supervisory position was recently filled as well. Steve Merritt, former Senior Permit Specialist, was appointed to the position of Team Leader for the Building Inspection Team. "Steve's experience with plan review and inspection will provide positive leadership for a hard working group of Building Inspectors.", said Vernell Woods, Deputy Code Official.

Overall, the Building Construction Services Division is more able to meet the demand for permits and inspections with the newly added staff. All of the added staff has significant experience in either government permit organizations or in customer service positions in the private sector. Several staff were able to immediately begin performing their duties without a traditional break-in period. There are a few positions remaining to be filled. These additional vacancies in the Division will be the focus of interviews in the coming month. These include Permit Specialist and Senior Permit Specialist positions. They are expected to be complete within the coming month.

NORFOLK READIES DAMAGE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES WITH PRACTICE DRILL

During a catastrophe such as a hurricane, Building Construction Services joins with Property Maintenance to form a damage assessment team. This team has the responsibility of evaluating every building in the City of Norfolk. The purpose of this damage assessment is so that the City Government can report on the condition of buildings to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. There are two reports required to be submitted; an IDA (Initial Damage Assessment) within 24 hours that gives an "overview" of the damage. The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) must follow

and be within 72 hours of the event. This report is much more extensive and must include every damaged building in the City of Norfolk. The damage must be evaluated as to severity as well such as destroyed, major damage, minor damage, and affected. In addition, if the damaged building is not habitable, this group must make that determination and post a placard indicating the condition. Because the two separate departments coordinate on this, both have been preparing with a readiness drill every year. This year, there are many new employees who are learning

about damage assessment. Ralston McInnis and Vernell Woods coordinate across Department lines to manage the overall team and spearhead training efforts. McInnis leads the effort from Property Maintenance and has been working to update team assignments and prepare for the drill expected soon. "We must be prepared every year for the kind of storm that requires a FEMA report", he said. "We only have 3 days to get it right", he added. The report submitted to FEMA establishes the basis for a declaration of disaster by the State. In addition, this damage assessment guides FEMA inspectors with their assessment afterward.

**ICC Conference is September
16- - October 1, 2006 in
Orlando, Florida**

ICC Code Development Conference scheduled

The International Code Council (ICC) promulgates the series of I Codes adopted by the State of Virginia. Those codes are updated every 18 months and printed every three years. Proposed changes will be heard for all of the codes this year in a two week period in the latter half of September in Orlando, Florida. "There are approximately 2,200 proposals to be reviewed by 15 committees over a week-long marathon. The code changes are scheduled on two tracks that run simultaneously. The code hearings begin Wednesday, September 20th and continue until October 1st", said Lynn Underwood, who is a member of the IRC Plumbing/Mechanical Code Committee. Vernell Woods, Deputy Code Official and Ralston McInnis, Team Leader; both from the City of Norfolk are members of the International Property Maintenance Code Committee. All three will participate in hearings. These hearings can be viewed live online at www.iccsafe.org.

Organization Meeting Schedule

VBCOA Region 8

October 14, 2006 Region Picnic
October 19, 2006 Sammy & Nicks
December 14, 2006 Sammy & Nicks

VBCOA Chapter

Oct 22-24, Annual, Staunton, Virginia

IAEI Eastern

August 24, Board Meeting; Hampton
TBA, Chapter meeting; Hampton

IAEI Chapter

VPMIA

August 30, Board meeting; Charlottesville

VFPA

October 16-17, Annual Meeting; Roanoke

VCCA

Sept 7, 8, Board meeting and General Membership meeting; Fredericksburg

WEB-BASED PERMITS COMING

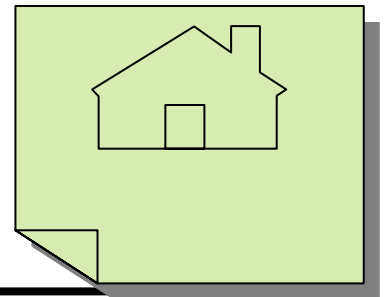
Imagine using the Internet to get a building permit. That day is fast approaching. The first steps have already been taken. Building Construction Services Division have begun to accept credit card purchases for permit fees. That step paved the way. Soon, permits for simple projects will be available at a convenient website. Those will include Plumbing, Mechanical and Electrical Permits; those not requiring an advanced review. Using the currently-available software; HTE®, a product called: "Click-to-Gov" will be added in the near future that will make that possible.

A customer will simply log

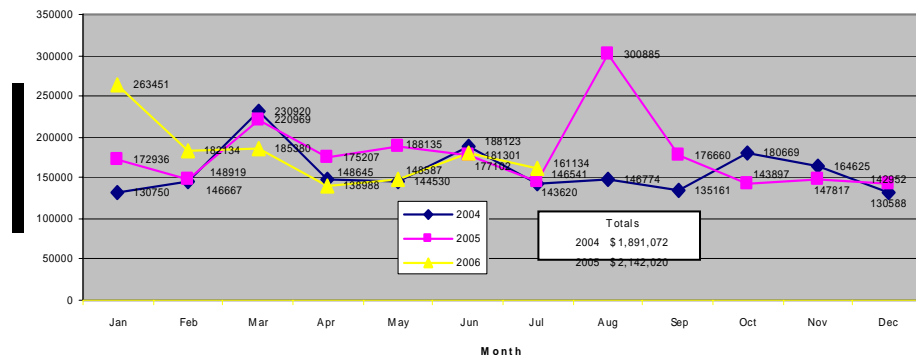
onto a website, follow prompts, pay a fee via credit card, then print out the permit card on their own printer. The permit will be registered onto the main database as being issued; allowing the customer to call for inspections as normal.

This concept has been around for a few years while very few jurisdictions have taken advantage of the technology. At present, the web-based permit process will be limited to only those few kinds of permit activity that do not require a review. In time, using our electronic plan capability, this office will be able to accept permit applications and plans

via the same process. Since most architects and designers are using CAD for plan development, sending and receiving plans electronically makes a lot of sense. Last year, this Division received approval for the purchase of software that makes exchange of electronic plans possible. That software is currently being implemented and staff training will begin soon.



Combined Plan Review and Permit Revenue Received per Month Over Three Years

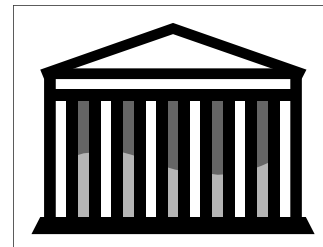


REVENUE FOR ALL PERMITS AT ALL TIME HIGH

Revenue for all permits for the month of July set a new, all time record for the month. Over \$161,000 was received for permits. Previous July revenue totals were \$143,000 and \$146,000; up roughly 12%. While permit totals were down slightly from July, 2005 (1044 from 1080; approximately 3%), the increased fees along with a drop in overall projects is an

indication that the type of permit activity has changed. While permits may have decreased, the complexity of the projects have increased. Instead of smaller additions, larger or more complex

buildings are being built. The result is two-fold. The amount of work in preliminary plan review as well as inspection during construction. This increase in the valuation for buildings and structures roughly corresponds with an increase in work for Division staff.



Permit Activity; Permit Fees set new highs this month

VBCOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN STAUNTON

Members of the Virginia Building and Code Official's Association will attend their annual school and conference this year in Staunton. A Region Chair and Board meeting will begin the gathering on Sunday, October 22, 2006. The Annual meeting begins on Monday with a welcome by Lacy B. King, Mayor of Staunton followed by Committee and State reports. The business meeting will include election of officers. Training begins in the afternoon with a discussion of the International Existing Building Code. The instructor is Tim Ryan, Building Official from Overland Park, Kansas. Ryan is a Board Member of the International Code Council and the Chairman of the IEBC Code Committee.

A banquet will be held Monday

Evening. Wally Bailey, ICC Vice President will deliver the keynote address. During the banquet, newly elected officers will be installed. Awards and honors will be presented as well. After these events, the newly installed president will deliver an address. A group breakfast begins the day on Tuesday. Then education and training will continue with a focus on rehabilitation and renovation issues. Three separate speakers will present unique perspectives on challenges faced when rehabilitating older building. Frank Strassler, of Historic Staunton Foundation will present: "Maintenance Issues for Historic Buildings". Kathy Frazier with Frazier Associates will present: "Design Issues for Historic Buildings". Robin

Miller, a developer from Richmond, will present: "Re-using existing Historic Structures".

Participation in the Annual school and conference is encouraged for all building safety professionals. VBCOA is an organization of Building and Code Officials from across the State of Virginia. The organization has been active for 75 years. The Virginia Building and Code Officials Association is a Statewide organization of construction regulators and representatives dedicated to the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of all persons who live, work, or visit the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Spanish-in-a-Pinch

VBCOA's Region 8 sponsored two summer training classes to assist inspectors communicate with Spanish construction workers. The two classes were held in Norfolk and Williamsburg and attended by almost 60 Inspectors, Plans Examiners or Building Officials. The class was taught by Deby Jones, founder of 2nd Language Success. Jones classes are accredited with the International Code Council for required continuing educational credits.

DEPUTY CODE OFFICIAL AND TEAM LEADER SPEAK TO AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vernell Woods, Deputy Code Official and Anthony Anderson will present an educational program to Virginia's Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in Roanoke, Virginia. The training will include an update from the 2000 to the 2003 edition of the International Family of Building Codes. Woods will additionally present the basics of a newly

adopted International Existing Building Code; the model code adopted as Virginia's Rehabilitation Code last year.

The Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture has been a membership organization of Virginia architects since 1914. They provide a forum for education and training as well as fostering support for more 2000 architects across

the State. AIA will authorize six CEU credits for attending the presentation by Mr. Woods and Mr. Anderson. The two have taught for the Virginia Building Code Academy for the past two years.



Permit Application Via Fax

The Construction Services Division has implemented a new service. For plumbing, mechanical or electrical permits, you can make your application via fax. The service works just like mail-in applications, except you use a credit card for payment. The application for a faxed permit is on the City website. Follow the instructions on the application. You will be sent a permit card and your credit card will be debited for the permit fee. You can send a faxed permit application and get a permit within the same day, then request any required inspection as soon as the permit is issued. "This will save the tradesman time and money. With the price of gasoline, we want to make it as easy as possible for the contractor", said Anthony Anderson, Team leader for Permits.



SPECIAL INSPECTION TRAINING HELD

Virginia Building and Code Official's Association's Region 8 provided a series of three training opportunities for the Hampton Roads Regional Special Inspection Guidelines and Procedures. The Regional "policy" has been implemented for a year and has had some minor changes. Engineers and Building Officials who were part of the original committee conducted the training. "The overall set of procedures and these changes was the focus of the trainings", said Lynn Un-

derwood, Code Official and policy coordinator for the Region. "These procedures, when implemented establish uniformity across the Tidewater communities from Williamsburg to Chesapeake", he continued.

Special Inspection, as set out in Chapter 17 in the International Building Code refers to an ASTM standard (E-329) for qualifications. These qualifications and reports must be sub-

mitted, reviewed and approved. The training will concentrate on the required qualifications of the Special Inspector as well as the review and approval of periodic and final reports. The Statement of Special Inspection has undergone some changes with wording that matches the current version of the IBC and the USBC. Training is from 9AM—1PM.

Trainings were held at:
9/6 Chesapeake Library
9/8 Newport News City Office
9/12 Norfolk Fire Training Center

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Building Construction Services
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[www.norfolk.gov/
planning](http://www.norfolk.gov/planning)**

**Virginia Moving Toward
Adoption of 2006 I Codes**

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development has announced a schedule for adopting the 2006 edition of the International Family of Codes. Known as the "I Codes", the following represent those codes being considered for adoption: International Building Code, International Plumbing Code, International Fuel gas Code, International Mechanical Code, International Residential Code, International Energy Conservation Code, International Property Maintenance Code, International Existing Building Code and the International Fire Code. In addition to these "I Codes", the State will also adopt the 2005 edition of the National Electrical Code published by the National Fire Protection Association. The schedule for adoption is a long and involved process, subject to change. However, the current target date for enactment is either late 2007 or early 2008.

Proposed code changes to the model code are being considered and will move along the process that includes a public hearing process. The Virginia Building and Code Official's Association is assisting the adoption process by reviewing proposed code changes and making recommendations.

Departmental Vision

To integrate the best ideas from all segments of the community with innovative planning techniques in order to create a holistic framework for a vibrant and diverse community to live, work and play.

Departmental Mission

To apply the highest quality planning and reflect regulatory principles to preserve, protect and enhance Norfolk's developed and natural environments.

DHCD News

Sandi Morris has been named DHCD's new Manager of Training and Certification Office. The Training and Certification Office is currently reviewing its existing procedures for providing training and issuing certifications. Based on this there are a number of exciting initiatives coming down the pike including:

The Train-the-Trainer program standards have been improved allowing opportunities for initial and ongoing instructor growth and appropriate compensation for skill and expertise as well as enhancing the overall programs of both the state and local academies.

The Jack Proctor Virginia Building Code Academy will now offer all its programs in 4 semester blocks to allow for all the training to be provided within this period, increasing training offerings, and reducing the amount of time to complete requirements. The 2007 schedule is scheduled to be released in October.

Code Corner:

Q: What is the minimum width of a stairway in a home? Why?

A: Generally, a stair way must have a clear width of 36" above the handrails. If there is only one handrail, the space below must be at least 31.5 inches wide. If handrails are on both sides, a clear space of 27 inches is required. Section R311.5 IRC is amended somewhat by the USBC. Generally, the width of the stair was originally for ease in moving furniture to other levels. The width requirement of 36" above the handrail is for a minimum egress in an emergency.

Q: Do I need a guardrail on a screened in porch? Why?

A: If the walking surface of the porch is more than 30" above grade below, a guard rail is required even if the porch is screened-in. This is a new provision added to the code in the 2003 edition of the IRC. Section R312.1 specifies the requirement. Generally, this is to protect an occupant who may suspect that the screen will support them in case of an impact load such as falling against the screen.

If you have a question for this section, e-mail it to:

Lynn.underwood@norfolk.gov

CODE OFFICIAL TRAVELS TO AFGHANISTAN

The International Code Council Foundation (ICCF) has been awarded a contract to provide technical assistance to the Nation of Afghanistan. The technical assistance will include a building safety platform for the re-building effort for the beleaguered country after years of war have destroyed infrastructure.

ICCF sought interest from ICC members for participation. The City of Norfolk's Code Official, Lynn Underwood, was selected to participate. Underwood is one of eight members on the Technical Assistance Committee and one of three selected to make one or more in-country visits to Kabul, Afghanistan over the next 18 months. There will be up to three visits into Kabul, Afghanistan and three visits with Afghani officials in the United States. "These Afghani officials are visiting various building inspection offices to learn how things are sup-

posed to work", said Underwood. "We will be traveling to Kabul to see what kind of construction activities are underway, to learn about their culture and survey the government infrastructure to more adequately develop an inspection program that's workable for them", he continued. The outreach into a war-torn nation like Afghanistan is an effort to export the modern success of a cutting edge building safety technology in the hope that the rebuilding efforts will last for generations to come. There are eight other Building Officials with extensive background

in building department operation. Most are of Persian descent. Underwood was selected in part because of his understanding of a common construction material used in that nation: adobe. In addition, he has made a similar trip to El Salvador in January of 2005 where he surveyed the restoration work performed by USAID of buildings damaged by flooding and earthquakes. The final product will be a building code and inspection

Staff appointed to Head Region Activities

Vernell Woods was recently voted to Chair the Virginia Building and Code Official's Association's Region 8. This region is one of 8 across the State of Virginia and includes cities and counties from Williamsburg to the Eastern Shore. The term for the position as "Chair" will be two years. Rick Veditz, from York County was re-elected to Vice Chair and James Pippin of Portsmouth was elected Secretary/ Treasurer. As Chairman, Woods earns membership on the Board of VBCOA. The eight Region Chairs establish a committee that regulates the Budget and are also in charge of the Strategic Plan for the Chapter. Among other duties, the Chair organizes all Region activities including training opportunities. Region Eight has been the most active, having more training opportunities than others.